

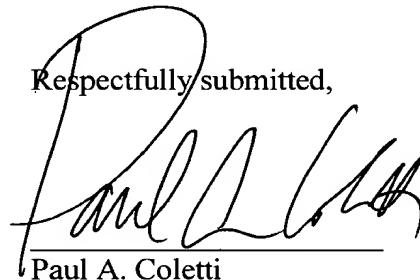
REMARKS

This amendment is made in response to the Final Rejection dated March 26, 2003. Therein, independent claim 1 and 25 were rejected using 35 USC § 102(b) over Fischell, U.S. Patent No. 5,697,971. Further, Fischell was used to reject all of the remaining claims under 35 USC § 103(a). In addition, claims 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 were rejected under 35 USC § 103 using Cox, U.S. 6,273,911 in view of Klein, U.S. 5,922,020. With the amendment made herein, this rejection is traversed.

None of the art shows the diverging tapered curved section as is now claimed. Rather, at best, Fischell shows an area of thickness at the center of a stent. *No* accompanying description is given. Moreover, Klein shows “weakened cross-sections” but not the “continued tapered strut” as now claimed. Therefore, one reading this prior art would not be able to use Fischell or Klein to derive the current invention, either under 35 USC § 102 or USC § 103.

As such, Applicants request allowance of claims 1-25. Should the Examiner seek to discuss this claims with Applicant’s attorney, she is requested to do so at the below listed number.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul A. Coletti", written over a horizontal line.

Paul A. Coletti
Reg. No. 32,019
Attorney for Applicants

Johnson & Johnson
One Johnson & Johnson Plaza
New Brunswick, NJ 08933-7003
(732) 524-2815
September 24, 2003